

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION



## Germs: A Gift You Won't be Thankful for

### Germs can be spread from....

Sally's dad, who has influenza, when he sneezes into his hands



and then touches the faucet.

Sally's mom then uses the faucet when making school lunches.



Later in the day, Sally eats the school lunch that her mom made her.



A few days later, Sally is starting to sneeze and cough. She then plays on the monkey bars at recess.



Tommy plays on the same equipment with Sally at recess.



Before you know it, Tommy starts coughing and sneezing → he has the flu!

Pretty soon, Tommy's sister, his mom, and his dad all have influenza from germs spread from Sally's dad.



You probably weren't just the "lucky" person to win the illness lottery the last time you caught a cold or the flu. You most likely caught a virus from germs passed on from a number of possible people or items. Now you're thinking, "Great—how exactly did that happen? And how do I keep it from happening again?"

Germs that carry viruses, such as the flu, can spread to others up to 6 feet away—most experts think that these types of viruses are spread mostly by droplets made when people with the virus cough, sneeze, or talk. The droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby; also, a person might get the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth or nose (CDC, 2013). So when you are feeling crummy but still have to function around others, what should you do to avoid spreading the "runny nose and scratchy cough" love?

The most important think you can do is to keep your germs from spreading to others:

- 1) **Cover your cough**—use a tissue or your elbow.
- 2) **Clean your hands**—use soap and water or hand sanitizer. And keep your hands away from your face!
- 3) **Contain germs**—stay home when you are sick.

From the looks of the pictures at the left and bottom, these 3 steps were not followed and germs spread from person to person and family to family. Getting your vaccinations won't hurt either—from a flu shot to Tdap to other vaccinations. It can all help to stop the spread! With the holidays fast approaching, stick to sharing conversation and holiday treats with family and friends, not germs.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- *Scott County Health Department will be closed Friday, November 11, 2016 in observance of Veteran's Day.*
- *Scott County Board of Health Meeting, Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 12:00 PM, Thursday, November 17, 2016.*
- *Scott County Health Department will be closed November 24-25, 2016 in observation of Thanksgiving.*

## Links

The Great American Smokeout

<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/index>

Social Media:

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Great-American-Smokeout>

# Great American Smokeout

## History:

The Great American Smokeout is held annually on the third Thursday in November. The event encourages people who smoke to quit for the day, hoping that their decision will last throughout their lifetime. The first national Great American Smokeout was held in 1976. It originated in Massachusetts in 1971 when a high school guidance counselor complained that if he had a nickel for every cigarette he saw laying outside the school, he would have the start of a great college scholarship. So in 1972 in the town of Randolph, Massachusetts, they held the first Don't Smoke event and the town raised \$4,500 that first year. Within a few years it caught on and took off in other places in the United States. In many towns and cities, local volunteers use this event to publicize the need to quit, and press for laws that control tobacco use and discourage teens from starting, while supporting people who want to quit.

Quitline Iowa offers evidence-based, culturally competent tobacco cessations services to all Iowans. Call the Quitline to get started at 1.800.Quit.Now (1.800.784.8669) or online at [www.quitlineiowa.org](http://www.quitlineiowa.org).

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